

THE PATIENCE OF THE PEOPLE.

("Il s'est dit tant de fois.")

[III., May, 1830.]

How often have the people said: "What's power?"
Who reigns soon is dethroned? each fleeting hour
Has onward borne, as in a fevered dream,
Such quick reverses, like a judge supreme--
Austere but just, they contemplate the end
To which the current of events must tend.
Self-confidence has taught them to forbear,
And in the vastness of their strength, they spare.
Armed with impunity, for one in vain
Resists a nation, they let others reign.

G.W.M. REYNOLDS.

Dictated before the Rhone Glacier.

("Souvent quand mon esprit riche.")

[VII., May 18, 1828.]

When my mind, on the ocean of poesy hurled,
Floats on in repose round this wonderful world,

Oft the sacred fire from heaven--

Mysterious sun, that gives light to the soul--

Strikes mine with its ray, and above the pole

Its upward course is driven,

Like a wandering cloud, then, my eager thought

Capriciously flies, to no guidance brought,

With every quarter's wind;

It regards from those radiant vaults on high,

Earth's cities below, and again doth fly,

And leaves but its shadow behind.

In the glistening gold of the morning bright,

It shines, detaching some lance of light,

Or, as warrior's armor rings;

It forages forests that ferment around,

Or bathed in the sun-red gleams is found,

Where the west its radiance flings.

Or, on mountain peak, that rears its head

Where snow-clad Alps around are spread,

By furious gale 'tis thrown.
From the yawning abyss see the cloud scud away,
And the glacier appears, with its multiform ray,
The giant mountain's crown!

Like Parnassian pinnacle yet to be scaled,
In its form from afar, by the aspirant hailed;
On its side the rainbow plays,
And at eve, when the shadow sinks sleeping below,
The last slanting ray on its crest of snow
Makes its cap like a crater to blaze.

In the darkness, its front seems some pale orb of light,
The chamois with fear flashes on in its flight,
The eagle afar is driven;
The deluge but roars in despair to its feet,
And scarce dare the eye its aspect to meet,
So near doth it rise to heaven.

Alone on these altitudes, feeling no fear,
Forgetful of earth, my spirit draws near;
On the starry vault to gaze,
And nearer, to gaze on those glories of night,
On th' horizon high heaving, like arches of light,
Till again the sun shall blaze.

For then will the glacier with glory be graced,
On its prisms will light streaked with darkness be placed,
 The morn its echoes greet;
Like a torrent it falls on the ocean of life,
Like Chaos unformed, with the sea-stormy strife,
 When waters on waters meet.

As the spirit of poesy touches my thought,
It is thus my ideas in a circle are brought,
 From earth, with the waters of pain.
As under a sunbeam a cloud ascends,
These fly to the heavens--their course never ends,
 But descend to the ocean again.

Author of "Critical Essays."

THE POET'S LOVE FOR LIVELINESS.

("Moi, quelque soit le monde.")

[XV., May 11, 1830.]

For me, whate'er my life and lot may show,

Years blank with gloom or cheered by mem'ry's glow,
Turmoil or peace; never be it mine, I pray,
To be a dweller of the peopled earth,
Save 'neath a roof alive with children's mirth
Loud through the livelong day.

So, if my hap it be to see once more
Those scenes my footsteps tottered in before,
An infant follower in Napoleon's train:
Rodrigo's holds, Valencia and Leon,
And both Castiles, and mated Aragon;
Ne'er be it mine, O Spain!

To pass thy plains with cities scant between,
Thy stately arches flung o'er deep ravine,
Thy palaces, of Moor's or Roman's time;
Or the swift makings of thy Guadalquiver,
Save in those gilded cars, where bells forever
Ring their melodious chime.

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